

**James Madison to A. B. Woodward, September 11, 1824. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.**

**TO A. B. WOODWARD. MAD. MSS.**

Montpellier, Sepr 11, 1824.

Dr. Sir, I have recd. & return my thanks for the printed communications accompanying your note of the 4th inst.

To appreciate your proposed expedient for a standard of measures & weights would require more time than I can apply, & more mathematical Science than I retain. Justice will doubtless be done to it by competent Judges.

I have given a hasty perusal to the observations "addressed to the Individual Citizen." Altho' I cannot concur in some of them, I may say of all that they merit every praise for the perspicuity, the precision, & the force, with which they are presented to the public attention.

You have fallen into a mistake in ascribing the Constitution of Virga. to Mr. Jefferson, as will be inferred from the animadversions on it in his "Notes on Virginia." Its origin was with George Mason, who laid before the Committee appointed to prepare a plan a very broad outline,<sup>1</sup> which was printed by the Come. for consideration, & after being varied on some points & filled up, was reported to the Convention where a few further alterations, gave it the form in which it now stands. The Declaration of rights was subsequently from the same hand. The Preamble to the Constitution was probably derived in great measure if not

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wholly from the funds of Mr. Jefferson, the richness of which in such materials is seen in the Declaration of Independence as well as elsewhere. The plan of Mr. Jefferson annexed to one of the Editions of his "Notes on Virga." was drawn up after the Revoly. war, with a view to correct the faults of the existing Constitution, as well as to obtain the authentic sanction of the people.

1 July, 1826. For a more recollected view of this matter, see an account of the origin & progress of the "Constitution of Virginia," by J. M. & among his papers.— *Madison's Note*. See *ante*, Vol. 1., p. 32.

Your love of truth will excuse this little tribute to it, or rather would not excuse its omission.

With esteem & good wishes